C U R R E N T D E V E L O P M E N T S I N T H E E A S T E R N

E U R O P E A N C H U R C H E S

from the East-European desk of the World Council of Churches

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Introduction

The present number of "Current Developments in the Eastern European Churches", like the preceding numbers, gives a survey of the controversy which is going on in the USSR between Christians and atheists.

The first part contains the official description of the relation of the state and the Communist Party to the different religious bodies in the Soviet Union. The text is taken from the latest edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia.

Another passage, also taken from the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia, shows how all forms of evangelism undertaken by the churches are characterized by the state in the Soviet Union.

A striking interpretation of this attitude is clear from the reply given by Mr. Krushchev (the head of the Government and leader of the Communist Party) to a representative of the Indian people, who touched on the problem of religion in his welcoming address.

Facts about religious life in the USSR may be deduced from the various "stories" in the Communist press - especially in the organs intended for or dealing with young people. These clearly show that there are strong religious impulses today in the Soviet Union, but also tendencies towards religious exaltation.

The second part consists of extracts from publications of the Orthodox Church, which testify to the spirituality of the largest Christian Church in the USSR - the Russian Orthodox Church.

The survey of the life of the churches in this part of the world, which feels a special call to work for peace, closes with news of the churches in other countries of Eastern Europe.

Religion and Church in the USSR

The latest edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia contains the following article on this subject (Volume 50, pp.642/643).

"On the 23rd January (5th February) 1918 the Soviet Government passed a decree concerning the division between Church and State, and between school and Church. This decree has since been incorporated into the Constitution of the USSR.

Paragraph 124 of the Constitution says: "In order to guarantee complete freedom of conscience for citizens, the state is separated from the Church in the USSR, and the school is separated from the Church. All citizens are assured of freedom of worship and freedom to exercise anti-religious propaganda."

Thus the Orthodox Church has no longer its former position of pre-eminence. All the churches and confessions are now placed on an equal footing.

In accordance with the decree separating Church from State, and school from Church, in the Soviet Union it is prohibited to pass any local laws and ordinances which would restrict freedom of conscience, or grant any kind of privilege to certain citizens on account of their confessional affiliation.

All forms of persecution on account of religious convictions, and any action which might hurt the religious feelings of believers, are prohibited by law in the USSR.

Every citizen is free to profess any religion he likes, or no religion.

Curtailment of rights owing to membership of any religion, or non-membership of a religion, is prohibited. The decree prohibits any reference in official documents or permits to the religious affiliation, or non-affiliation, of citizens. Furthermore it is forbidden to attach any kind of religious customs or ceremonies to official acts of state or other public legal bodies.

In guaranteeing the free practice of religion, the Soviet State at the same time grants the local authorities the right to take any measures required for public safety, if the exercise of religious customs infringes public order, or is connected with circumstances which affect the rights of citizens in the USSR. No one can refuse to carry out his duties as a citizen on account of his religious views.

Official certificates in the USSR can be issued only by government offices. But citizens with religious beliefs can attend additional ceremonies if they wish when they have their children baptised, when they get married, etc.

Religious instruction in schools is prohibited, except in religious schools. Citizens have the right to give religious instruction, or to receive it. All church buildings and religious objects are the property of the state; they are placed at the disposal of the corresponding religious bodies free of charge on the basis of special regulations.

Freedom of conscience means that the Church does not interfere in state affairs, and that the State does not interfere in the affairs of the Church and of religious bodies. The clergy enjoy full political and civic rights, like all the other citizens of the Soviet Union.

As a consequence of the far-reaching changes in social and economic conditions, the liquidation of the exploiting classes, the victory of socialism in the USSR, the progress of scientific knowledge and the raising of the general cultural level, the majority of the population in the Soviet Union have liberated themselves from religion. However, there are still quite a number of citizens who, although they take an active part in the life of the country and honourably carry out their civic duties to their motherland, are still under the influence of religious bodies of different kinds.

The following churches and religious bodies form strong religious associations in the USSR:

The Russian Orthodox Church
The Roman Catholic Church
The Evangelical-Lutheran Church
The Armenian-Gregorian Church
The Georgian (Grusian) Orthodox Church
The Old Believers
The Reformed (Calvinistic) Church
The Methodist Church
The Church of the Baptists and Evangelical-Christians
The Moslems
The Buddhists
The Jews

In addition there are a number of smaller religious bodies, including the Seventh-Day Adventists, the "Molokans", etc.

The churches and religious bodies in the USSR own monasteries and convents, of which the following are the most important:

in the Russian Orthodox Church	-	the Troitse-Sergieva Lavra (Zagorsk) the Kievo-Petcherskaia Lavra (Kiev) the Potchaevskaia Lavra (Volynia),
in the Roman-Catholic Church	-	the Convent at Aglon (Latvian People's Republic)
in the Armenian-Gregorian Church	-	the Monastery at Etchmiadzin (Armenian People's Republic)
belonging to the Buddhists	-	the Buddhist Monastery in the Aginsk Buriat-Mongolian National Oblast district.

In the monasteries which own land, the inmates are engaged in agriculture and manual work.

The religious associations have the right to hold conferences and meetings of clergy and members' representatives, to publish religious periodicals, liturgical books, church-calendars and other religious books, for which purpose the State places printing facilities and paper at their disposal.

There are special religious colleges for training those who officiate at religious services. They send their pupils abroad in order to perfect themselves in the theological faculties there.

The religious centres and associations have the right to rent, purchase or build buildings for their services, to arrange for the necessary means of transport, and to provide themselves with workshops for making candles and religious objects.

The religious centres and associations are supported by the voluntary contributions of their followers. They do not receive any subsidies from the State. The State imposes no tax on the income of the churches and religious associations, but the clergy have to pay the same taxes as all other citizens.

The religious associations are registered by the state offices, which cannot put a stop to their activities, however, unless they are hostile to the Soviet State (e.g. refusal to carry out their civic duties, refusal to defend the motherland, abstention from voting at state and other official elections, incitement to religious fanaticism, plotting against the State, etc.).

The largest church in the USSR, measured by the number of members, clergy and religious gatherings, is the Russian Orthodox Church, the head of which is the Patriarch of Mosoow and all Russia. Side by side with it is the Holy Synod, of which the Metropolitans of Krutitsi and Kolomna, Leningrad and Ladoga, Kiev and Galicia, are permanent members. The Russian Orthodox Church is divided into bishoprics (eparchies), whose boundaries coincide with the districts and republics of the USSR. The Russian Orthodox Church has foreign eparchies in the USA, France, Germany, Austria, Israel, etc., all of which are under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Mosoow and all Russia.

Another Orthodox Church in the USSR is the Grusian Church, whose head is the Katholikos-Patriarch of all Georgia (Grusia).

The second-largest religious body, after the Russian Orthodox Church, measured by the number of members, clergy and religious gatherings, is the Mohammedan faith (Islam). The overwhelming majority of Mohammedans in the USSR belong to the Sunnite branch of Islam. The members of the other (Sheeite) branch live mainly in the Azerbaijan Republic. The religious life of the Moslems in the USSR is directed from four religious centres: (1) the religious administration of the Moslems of Central Asia and Khasakistan in Tashkent, the Usbekish Republic, this also has authority over the Moslems in Usbekish, Tajik, Turkmenish, Khirgisih and Khasakistan Republics; (2) the religious authorities in the European part of the USSR and Siberia with their headquarters in Ufa (Bashkirian Autonomous People's Republic) which includes the Moslems in inner Russia, the Urals, Siberia and White Russia; (3) the Moslem admi-

nistrative headquarters in the Northern Caucasus and Dagestan, situated in the town of Buinaksk. All these religious administrations are under the control of Muftis who - like the rest of the administrative staff - are elected by the clergy and by representatives of the faithful. (4) A fourth religious centre is the religious administration of Moslem Trans-Caucasia in Baku (Azerbaijan Republic).

The Roman Catholic Church, represented mainly in the Western republics of the USSR, has no single headquarters. In the Latvian People's Republic it is under the administration of a Metropolitan, in the Lithuanian Republic it is under a Bishop.

The Evangelical-Lutheran Church has its congregations mainly in Esthonia and Latvia. It is administered by Archbishops.

The Armenian-Gregorian Church is under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Patriarch-Katholikos of all the Armenians. The Church is divided into dioceses, many of which are abroad.

The Church of the Old Believers is divided into three branches, which have no connection with one another. They are: the Bielo-Krinnitza Hierarchy, under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Moscow and all Russia (in Moscow); a Church which does not recognise any religious hierarchy (the Bezpopovzy or priestless Church) directed by a Supreme Religious Council in Vilnius (Lithuania); and the Church which recognises the priests which have come over from the Greek Orthodox Church ("renegade priests") with an Archbishop in Kuibychev (Volga region).

The Church of the Baptists and Evangelical-Christians is a union between two movements which were formerly independent: the Gospel-Christians of the Baptist Church and the Pentecostalists. They are under the authority of a centre in Moscow, the "All Union Council of Baptist and Evangelical-Christians", which was set up as the result of common elections.

The Buddhist religion has adherents in the autonomous Buriat-Mongol Republic and in other national districts including the Oblast of Irkutst and Chitinsk. The supreme head of the Buddhists in the USSR bears the title Bandido-Khambo-Lama.

The Jewish religious associations, which have synagogues at their disposal, are all independent.

In addition to the above there are a large number of other religious confessions in the USSR, with a smaller membership. They all enjoy the same rights as the larger confessions.

In order to act as a liaison between the State and the different religious centres, two governmental departments were set up, which have equal rights: the Council for the Affairs of the Russian-Orthodox Church (since 1943) and the Council for Religious Services (since 1944). These departments form a contact between the state and the religious centres, when the latter raise questions on which the state has to take a decision.

As far as the State is concerned, religion is a private matter, and the Church is therefore divided from the State. But the Communist Party regards religion as an ideology which has nothing in common with scientific knowledge. It cannot, therefore, be neutral in its attitude to religion. The Communist Party educates the citizens of the USSR in the spirit of the scientific ideology of Marxism-Leninism, and carries on an ideological struggle with religion. The Communist Party considers it indispensable to carry on far-reaching, systematic propaganda for scientific atheism among the population.

But it is not permissible to hurt the feelings of believers or of church dignitaries, nor to interfere with the administration of the Church."

Missionary Effort
(from the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia, Volume 27, 2nd edition, pp.590/591

"One form of the religious-political activity of church organisations expresses itself in the conversion of people of other faiths; in the hands of the dominant exploiting classes, missionary effort is a means of enslaving peoples. It is most characteristic of Christianity.

The activity of the first missionaries in Western Europe, usually sent out by some church organisation, was closely connected with the extension and confirmation of Christianity as the dominant ideology of feudal society. The implanting of Christianity in its Catholic form, in the tenth to thirteenth centuries, became in the hands of German feudal barons, an ideological camouflage for aggression in the Slav Lithuanian and other countries (viz. Drang nach Osten), hence the missionary activity of Catholic clergy became an instrument of aggression in the East. This activity was connected with the cruel Crusades, in the course of which local populations suffered annihilation, plundering, forced baptism, etc. The Catholic missionaries, who forced Christianity in its Catholic form upon the Slavs and other peoples, stifled the local indigenous cultures, introducing the divine service in Latin, which was alien to these peoples. Most rebellions against the enslavers were accompanied by the expulsion or murder of the missionaries. The activity of Catholic missionaries was directed by the Papacy.

The Eastern-Christian (Orthodox) Church, the rival of the Catholic Church, whose aim was to extend the political influence of Byzantium, also carried on wide missionary activity. However, when spreading Christianity in strong Slavonic states (Rus, Bulgaria) it was forced to use other methods: in contrast to the Catholic church it supported the institution of "national" churches with divine service in the local (particularly in the Slav) language. Objectively speaking, Orthodox missionary activity, in certain countries (Moravia, and Pannonia) was a weapon in the struggle against German aggression.

Beginning with the 16th century, missionary effort became one of the means of establishing and strengthening the colonial system. Penetrating into America, Asia and Africa, missionaries played the role of scouts who were followed by the traders and soldiers of the conquerors. The craftiest methods of missionary activity were practised by the Jesuits in the 16th century. The Jesuits succeeded the Dominicans and Franciscans who had had the chief role in Catholic missions in the 13th to 15th centuries. Jesuit missionaries were among the first Europeans to penetrate many lands across the sea. In 1610 the Jesuit Order set up a theocratic state in Paraguay (viz. Jesuit State in Paraguay). The Jesuits' missionary efforts were combined with cruel exploitation of the Indians, who were turned into slaves of the Order. Under the pretence of struggle against paganism, the missionaries destroyed ancient monuments of the local indigenous culture which was one form of their struggle for subjugating the local populations. With the rise of Protestantism (16th century) Protestant missions had wide extension, and from the very beginning they served the interests of the bourgeoisie. At the end of the 18th century great Protestant missionary organisations arose: in 1795 the London Missionary Society and in 1799 the Church Mission Society in England, missionary societies in Germany, Holland and other countries. Missionary activity adopted more clever and refined forms (the organisation of schools, libraries, childrens' homes, hospitals, etc.). Missionary activities played an active role in the struggle of the capitalist countries to divide the world into zones of influence and to plunder the colonies. As agents of the capitalist states, the missionaries lived under the protection of these states, and received subsidies from them and all sorts of privileges. The unjust Tientsin Treaty which was forced upon China in 1858 provided among other things, special privileges for missionaries. The rising of the popular masses in colonial and dependent countries against the foreign yoke, was directed against the missionaries as well. (For instance, in the Boxer Rising in 1899 to 1901, and the 1911 revolution in China).

In Russia missionary work was organized by the Russian Orthodox Church and, as in other countries had as its purpose the planting of Christianity (Orthodoxy) among non-Russian peoples. Missionary activity was particularly strong in the period of the extension of the multi-national Russian state (16th to 19th centuries). It aided the intensification of the colonial régime of Tsarism in the outlying districts. At the same time missionary activity played a certain role in spreading the Russian language among non-Russian peoples, which was of some importance in strengthening the connections of those peoples with the Russian people.

In a period of Imperialism, missionary activity is an inseparable part of imperialist politics. The Vatican conducts active missionary work. A large number of missionary organisations in many countries are under the direction of the Vatican's Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. After World War I (1914 to 1918) in special encyclicals of the Roman popes issued in 1919 and 1926, a new tactic of the Vatican was indicated, proposing the training of Catholic clergy and missionaries from among the local populations in order to adapt propaganda to local customs and mores and thus make it more effective. In order to coordinate the activity of Protestant missionaries, a world missionary congress was held in

Edinburgh (Scotland) in 1910, where a central missionary council was elected. Since World War II (1939-1945) the missionary activity of the Vatican and of the outstanding majority of Protestant missionaries is subject chiefly to the interests of American imperialism. American religious missions exist in India, Australia, Africa, South America, the Philippines, Japan, Malaya, South Korea, and in other countries. Missionary activity is used by the imperialist governments in their struggle against the increasing nationalist-liberation movements in colonial and dependent countries. During the People's Liberation War in China, the missionaries carried on subversive espionage work to aid the Kuomintang and the USA. Missionaries of all religious tendencies especially increased their espionage and subversive work in the Chinese People's Republic in 1949. Having unmasked the counter-revolutionary activity of missionaries in China, the Government of the Chinese People's Republic in 1951 took the decision to transfer all "cultural-educational" institutions belonging to religious missions, to the control of the People's Government of China, and ordered the cessation of all mission activity in the country. Under the powerful rise of national-liberation movements in colonial and dependent countries, the attempts of missionaries to strengthen the position of the imperialist states in these countries are suffering complete failure."

Krushchev and Religion

When Mr. Krushchev received the International Lenin Prize on the 16th May, 1959 in Moscow the Indian delegate Pandit Sunderlala addressed a word to him in which he described the head of the Soviet Government as one of the greatest peace-champions of our time. According to him, "no one makes such efforts to secure world peace as Krushchev"...

"The union of mankind, the brotherhood of the whole human race, is the ultimate aim of all religions and all the great benefactors of mankind", stated Pandit Sunderlala, "and no one has worked harder to achieve that aim than you..."

"I am a religious man, whereas you probably don't like to hear the word "religion" (excitement among the audience). You probably describe yourself as an atheist.

"But I can assure you, in the light of the Holy Books of all the world religions which I have studied, as far as my modest faculties permit, that you are one of the most progressive leaders of men today, in the best sense of the word.

"But I welcome you also as a son of the soil, as the flesh of flesh. You are one of the greatest statesmen in the world. But you were not born in a palace with a silver spoon in your mouth. You were born in a working family, and have laboured with your own hands. You know what it means to earn one's daily bread by the sweat of one's brow.

"The fact that personalities like yourself rise to positions of leadership means that the old days of kings, emperors, aristocracy and big business-magnates have gone for ever. (Long applause).

"This means that the son of man (that beautiful expression used by Christ) will rise again and take his place on our planet. That will happen when true peace is established in the world. We will all struggle for that to the utmost of our powers."

Krushchev's reply was as follows: "The clear, striking words of Pandit Sunderlala, representing our friends the Indian people, contain one point with which I am not in agreement. From your speech one might draw the conclusion that as an atheist I don't like religious people. But this idea is wrong. You are right in saying that I am not a religious man, whereas you believe in religion. But that should not lead anyone to conclude that there must be any hostility or animosity between us.

"It is a well-known fact that religious people do not all share the same beliefs. There are many peoples in the world, and many religions. But those religions are not united in a common effort for peace; there is definite antagonism between them. History shows instances of religious wars.

"As atheists we do not allow ourselves fo feel any antagonism towards religious-thinking people. We have never promoted animosity between people for religious reasons, nor between states because of their different ideologies, nor do we intend to do so in future.

"We treat religious people not only with tolerance but with respect.

"We only attack if religion is exploited in order to harm human beings. Then we really do get active. (Applause)

"In the past the rulers of Czarist Russia dominated the Church, and then the capitalists and big landowners exploited it for their own purposes. The ruling classes played off the Church against the people, and thus against the believers among them.

"We have tried to make it clear to people that religious feelings must not be stirred up against the interests of the nation.

"It is true, we have our own views about the creation of the world - our materialist philosophy.

"But you too, representatives of the different religions, you too have your own opinions which differ from those of other peoples, with their own religions.

"We want everyone - both believers and atheists - to unite in the struggle for the most important thing - the struggle for peace and harmony between the nations, so that there may be no more wars, but that the nations may live in peace and friendship together (loud applause) ..."

In the second world war (continued Krushchev) many of the clergy of the different religious bodies in the USSR fought side by side with the people to defend Russia against invasion by the Fascists. "As is well known, their cooperation obtained full recognition. They were decorated by the Government with orders and medals." (Applause)

"My friends, I realise that it is not merely on account of my personal efforts that you have conferred upon me the International Lenin Prize. I am fulfilling the will of the Soviet people, of our Communist Party and of our Government.

"The conferring upon me of the International Lenin Prize must therefore by regarded as a recognition of the tremendous efforts made by the Soviet people in the struggle for peace and general security" (A storm of applause).

Krushchev went on: "Man was not created to destroy his fellows. It is not inherent in his nature, nor in his mental characteristics, to have to kill people.

"The exploiting classes exercised heavy pressure upon people to exterminate one another. In order to mould people, every possible means was used including barrack-drill and training in unconditional, blind obedience.

"In order to force a nation into war with another nation (although such wars bring nothing to the workers but suffering and distress) the exploiters thought out various theories. They even went so far as to call war a "natural condition" of the human race. They had no scruples even about exploiting religion for their purposes.

"In spite of the Christian commandment "Thou shalt not kill", the ruling classes claimed the clergy for military service, and forced them to lead men to the slaughter with the Cross in their hands and prayers on their lips, purely for the selfish interests of the exploiters."

Pravda, 17th May, 1959

A short guide to Moscow

The recently published short guide for visitors to Moscow contains the following information about the churches:

Churches and Sanctuaries

Russian-Orthodox Church. Liturgical mass at 10.00 a.m., Evening services at 6.00 p.m.

The main churches of Russian-Orthodox confession are:

Bogojawlenski Cathedral - Sparakowskaja Uliza 15
Resurrection Church - Russakowskoje Chaussée 51
The Church of Our Lady of Consolation - Bolschaja Ordynka 40
The Church of Ivan the Warrior - Jakimanka 46
St. Nicholas' Church - Tjoply Pereulok 1/2
Pimen Church - Nowo Worotnikowski Pereulok 3
Troize-Sergijewski Monastery at Zagorsk (35 miles' distance from Moscow on the railway line to Jaroslaw). Apart from the old cathedrals attached to monasteries in which services are held, we find here the theological academy and the religious seminary of the Russian-Orthodox Church.

The administrative headquarters of the entire Russian-Orthodox Church - the Holy Synod and the Moscow Patriarchate - is situated in Uliza Kropotkina, Chisty Pereulok 5.

Among the sanctuaries and churches of other denominations the following may be mentioned:

The Roman Catholic Church - Malaja Lubjanka 12 (Daily mass at 8.30 a.m. except on Mondays; Mass on Sundays at 8.30 a.m., 11.30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. Evening mass before feast days at 6.00 p.m.)
Church of the Evangelical Christians (Baptists) - Maly Wuzowski Pereulok 3 (Meetings on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 6.00 p.m. and on Sundays at 10.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m.)
Church of the Seventh Day Adventists - Maly Wuzowski Pereulok 3 (Services on Wednesday at 7.00 p.m. and on Saturday at 10.00 a.m.)
The Mohammedan Mosque - Wypolsow Pereulok 7 (Prayers five times a day, Fridays at 1.00 p.m.)
Jewish Synagogue - Bolshoi Spassoglinistshewski Pereulok 8 (Daily services from 10.00 a.m.; Evening prayers one hour before sunset.)
Cathedral of the Old Believers Church of the Belaja Kriniza tendence - Rogoshski Possjolok 29 (Daily mass at 8.00 a.m.)
Church of the Priestless Fellowship - Preobrashenski Wal 17 (Services on feast days and on the eve of feast days at 8.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m.)

USSR — Insistence on a stronger scientific basis for atheist propaganda

At its executive meeting held in Moscow on April 3rd, the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR passed a resolution in favour of a radical improvement in the education of its citizens in atheist thought.

The resolution announces measures to increase anti-religious propaganda. A special coordinating committee is to be set up to ensure closer connection between "all work in the field of atheism, including the scientific criticism of religion".

Special attention will also be paid to increasing the publication of popular scientific literature directed against religion. This point was specially advanced by A.P. Fantzev, a corresponding member of the Academy, who has consented to be Chairman of the new committee.

The decision to pass the resolution was preceded by strong criticism of the atheist propaganda at present being undertaken. The meeting made the criticism that the decrees of the 21st Party Congress, held in 1958, had not been sufficiently taken into account. It stressed the fact that, in the struggle against capitalist thinking, it was important for atheist propaganda to intensify its activities. The scientific criticism of religion did not come up to the requirements of the general principles laid down at the last party congress. It was especially true that inadequate attention was paid to "the history and theory of atheism, and therefore to the methods whereby the influence of religion might be eliminated from people's minds". Publications as well as museums under the direction of the Academy of Sciences had not made adequate use of the possibilities available - this was a gap which the Academy of Sciences must fill.

USSR — Improved atheist propaganda in Kaliningrad (the former Königsberg)

The Communist party leadership of Kaliningrad (formerly Königsberg, East Prussia) has decided to improve its scientific-atheist propaganda.

The different party newspapers in Kaliningrad were said to have carried out this task inadequately. Anti-religious propaganda must therefore be renewed. Competent persons from all parts of the population are to be drawn into the task of disclosing the reactionary character of religion. This propaganda is to be directed mainly to students and pupils attending technical courses, but also to members of sports clubs, youth groups, etc. Above all, systematic lectures on problems of atheism are to be held in the "House of Culture", in clubs and libraries, and anti-religious exhibitions are to be organised.

Radio, television and the press will also pay more attention to atheist propaganda in future.

USSR — Soviet periodical pays Baptists a back-handed compliment

A Soviet literary magazine paid a back-handed compliment to Russian Baptists when it criticised the Society for the Propagation of Scientific and Cultural Knowledge for "judging atheist propaganda by the number of lectures delivered, without regard for their quality".

This snub to the country's agency for the promotion of anti-religious propaganda was delivered by "Literaturnaia Gazeta", organ of the Writers' Union of the Russian Federation.

The paper drew particular attention to Magnitogorsk, a town in the Ural mountains, where it said "the hundreds of atheist lectures attended by thousands of people cannot compete with the influence of the local Baptists." This situation, the magazine imagined, was due probably to "the individual approach pursued by the Baptist community, especially by its leader, Brother Frizen."

"The fact that hymns are more effective than many of the atheist lectures is reflected by the fact that in the town of Magnitogorsk alone there are 500 Baptists," says Literaturnaia Gazeta". It continues, "Taking the above facts into account, it is better to judge atheist propaganda by its real influence on religious believers, and if it results in their giving up their beliefs, rather than by the number of lectures given, which in any case are rarely attended by churchgoers."

USSR

A stirring drama - "The Torch"

In its issue of March 10th, 1959, the paper "Sowjetzkaia Kultura" comments on a play produced at Tbilissi, in the Caucasus.

The title of the play is "The Torch" and its purpose is "to discuss the real and alleged meaning of life". Among other things the play tries to show that death has no terrors for the man who has lived a meaningful life of self-devotion to others and fulfilled the high task to which he was called. "For man must be convinced that he has lived rightly, if he is to emerge victorious from life's contradictory experiences."

The hero of the play is Professor Dronov, inspired by the idea to control the universe. "Dronov is in love with life, because he has a big heart." Nevertheless (as "Sowjetskaia Kultura" points out) there is something in this play which cannot be reconciled with the concepts of Soviet reality.

The second leading rôle is the priest Seraphim. "He is given too much ideological importance". Why?

After all, who is this Seraphim? A "staretz", a "survival of the Russian Orthodox past"?

Seraphim is not a "staretz"; he is a young Soviet who has studied mathematics and fought as a soldier in the Soviet army during the war, and been decorated several times for courageous action in face of the enemy.

After his release from the army, however, he found nothing better to do than to enrol as a student in a religious seminary.

How does S. Aliochin (author of "The Torch") treat the confrontation between Dronov and Seraphim in their dialogue on the question of the deepest meaning of human life?

Seraphim says, "While fighting with the partisans during the war, I met a priest who fought and died as a soldier. He knew what to say to men during the war. And I too have learnt what to say to men, after all I saw during the war. I realise what they need most."

Dronov replies, "That's interesting. What is it that men need?"

Seraphim, "Consolation - in other words, a faith. They need me today, and as a minister more and more people are coming to my church."

As a counter-balance to this way of thinking, which the paper considers to be foreign to the Soviet people, the author places certain replies in the mouth of Dronov.

Dronov and Seraphim are clearly foils opposed to one another. One tries to prove something, the other contradicts him. But for the commentator Dronov's refutations of Seraphim's arguments are not always sufficiently convincing.

And at the culminating-point of Seraphim's arguments, the dialogue breaks off, leaving them in the air.

Moreover the author presents the young priest in a way that arouses the disapproval of "Sowjetzkaia Kultura". "We are not satisfied with Seraphim's scattered explanations about his religious notions. They are insufficient". The paper goes on to ask, "Will a young man change his basic ideas merely through meeting a priest?"

Had Seraphim no friend who could restrain him from "his subjective monologue on life?"

"The Torch" contains no reply to this question. For the conversation between Seraphim and Dronov sounds "like a conversation between equals". The author does not present the young priest as if he were a fortuitous case, or an exception. Life should have taught the author "that he is dealing with a type which must be opposed," (says the paper).

How does the play end? Dronov faces the audience and pronounces the final monologue, while Seraphim stands beside him "like a symbol of a different philosophy of life, unconvinced and unbeaten." The struggle is therefore undecided.

The two figures stand out against the darkened background of the stage. And the brilliant scientist, Dronov, who is trying to master the universe, is not sufficiently convincing.

"Where is the collectivity which shows men like Dronov how to deal with people like Seraphim?" (asks the paper).

USSR

Of young believers and religious indifference among teachers

"In the town of Nesvich (district of Minsk) there is a beautiful old church, 'Utchitel'skaia Gazeta' (teacher's magazine) tells us in its issue of 28th March, 1959. Patients from the nearby sanatorium come to visit it as a miracle of architecture.

"But real miracles do happen here. For the church is visited not only by tourists but also by believers.

"Who is it who seeks consolation in prayer here?

"There is a boy in school uniform kneeling here and a schoolgirl standing there muttering a confused prayer.

"When asked what he was doing in a church, the boy remained silent, then finally said: "Everybody comes to church, even our teachers. They are there in front, near the crucifix."

"We spoke to them: "What makes you come here? Your pupils won't understand!"

"Their answer: "What does that matter? Nobody is prevented from entering a church, a monument of the past. Look how beautiful it is."

"But the young people come here to pray, don't they?"

"Those are pupils from the lower classes. We only have to look after the higher classes. If they come here, that is their parents' concern."

"Believing pupils and teachers, 'Utchitel'skaia' continues, are not infrequent in the USSR. This gives us a right to point to the failure of scientific-atheistic training for teachers. Dozens of teachers and school-mistresses think that the atheistic training to be given to children does not apply to them. They merely follow the principle: "The pupil has to be taught the compulsory subjects." The rest "will follow by itself". Most teachers do not engage in any atheistic work with their pupils and much less with the parents.

"And if high school students are taught historic materialism under the subject "Religion as a form of public consciousness", this is done for two hours every week.

"Neither do pedagogics outside school pay enough attention to scientific atheism. Some headmasters believe that atheist propaganda is not necessary in school. "What for?", they say "in any case our children are growing up within our socialist order of society".

"Thus when an atheistic lecture on the Christian celebration of Easter was held in the school of Saransk, the headmaster told the speaker: "Try to be short, don't make the children too tired, try to get through your subject in a quarter of an hour."

"The result: To the astonishment of the headmaster this lecture on atheism lasted nearly two hours because the children were so interested that they kept asking questions. "One could virtually feel that they wanted to know and understand a lot of things" - a healthy attitude on the part of young atheists who instructively want to turn away from religious obscurantism."

"At the end of an atheist discussion-evening a certain V. declared: "Both my children have become teachers and I have educated them for that profession. But they do not even attempt to rid me of my religious belief." "What have they been taught? Doesn't life force us to fight religion night and day?"

USSR

Let him go

("Komsomolskaia Pravda", April 12th, 1959)

Jevgenij Bobkov is a young man of twenty who is one of the standard-bearers in the Rogochsk-Cemetery in Moscow when processions are held in the Old Believers Church. He is doing his third term of law at the university of Moscow. He leads a double life. Only yesterday he passed brilliantly in an examination in political philosophy and economy; and today he holds aloft a richly-embroidered church-standard and murmurs prayers under his breath.

The question why he does not belong to a Komsomol never occurred to his comrades. But then a students' meeting was held, at which 300 students accused Bobkov, and only one stood up for him. They told him, "If you tell us you believe in God, we shan't believe you ... but you are definitely up to something. What advantage do you get out of carrying church-standards?"

For the students the matter was clear: "There is no God, and it is therefore foolish to believe in a God. And Bobkov? He is making a fool of himself; we shall have to expel him; his behaviour is a disgrace to the faculty. We won't make a big case of him. Let him go to his church".

But Bobkov's answer is frightening, "From my ninth year I have been blessed in serving God. I believe in God and His almighty power with all my heart."

Had no one noticed that Bobkov had been a sacristan in church since childhood?

Bobkov said, "You are wondering why I passed my examinations in philosophy, politics and political economy? Those are the subjects that I have to study with my fellow-students, that's all. No one has ever asked me about my personal convictions."

The Komsomol has overlooked this gifted young man (remarks "Komsomolskaia Pravda"), who could have become a good specialist ... Now that things have come to a head, everybody asks, "Should Bobkov really be expelled from the university?" But nobody sees that he is passing through an inner tragedy, because the rest of his life

is in direct contradiction with his belief in God. Bobkov himself feels this when he asks, "What is my belief in God based on? It is not easy to say. You believe with your heart, not with your mind."

His best friends should save him by exercising persuasion: "How do you conceive your life later on? In the mornings you are a Marxist and in the afternoons a churchman. You won't be able to stand this double life in the long run."

Bobkov should be made to understand that there is only one truth that man can recognise with his whole heart and mind. Bobkov must be drawn away from the Church.

The Komsomol of Moscow University is "a strong monolithic block that knows how to awaken high moral qualities in man."

"Bobkov's story is, of course, an exceptional case", concludes the article in "Komsomolskaia Pravda". But it goes on to enquire, "how many similar cases pass unobserved?"

USSR — A queer kind of soldier

"In our regimental office", writes an officer of the Soviet army of the district of Voronesh in "Komsomolskaia Pravda" of April 15th, "a young man reports in and ... with a grand gesture makes the sign of the cross...

"Your name is Bobrovsky?"

"God is my witness", the man answers and crosses himself again.

"Victor Tikhonovitch?" (patronymic)

"God is my witness", the voice echoes, and Victor crosses himself for the third time.

"Tell me, does your religion forbid you to answer my questions?"

Victor is visibly embarrassed but remains silent.

"This 22-year old Bobrovsky is the son of a kolkhose farmer. He has grown up like any boy of his age. He saw films, read books, etc. In 1955 he was drafted into the army to be trained as a radio-telephonist and driver. After his release from military service Victor, then a happy lad, tried to find a job in one of the special branches he had learned.

"Today he is like a deaf man, dazzled by the power of religious obscurantism, a fanatic who has renounced all earthly things. His military training still shows but his will is shattered and his thinking ability paralysed.

"It turns out that he has burned his military papers. Now a soldier who has lost his papers must be punished before he receives new ones. When Victor was told about this, he crossed himself three times and answered: "God forbid! I will not touch these devilish papers."

"You are liable to military service, Bobrovsky."

Answer: "I am a Christian".

"You are a citizen of the Soviet Union."

Answer: "I am a man of God (Ja Bochij Tchelovek)".

"If you believe in a God, that is your own affair, but you must obey the laws of the Soviet government."

Answer: "I obey God's commandments."

When the conversation had reached this stage, the officer decided to point out to Bobrovsky some principles of religion:

"According to Holy Scripture all authority comes from God, doesn't it?"

Answer: "That's right".

"Then the Soviet government is God-given as well".

Answer: "God tolerates the Soviet government."

"As a Christian you should then obey the Soviet government."

Answer: "It is not given to us sinners to answ r such questions."

Victor evaded answering further questions, "Komsomolskaia Pravda" reports, by referring to "God's mystery and God's commandments." Victor's family and he himself have joined the religious sect known as the "True Orthodox Christans" (not to be confused with the Orthodox Church). Bobrovsky, calls military service in the Soviet army service to the devil: nevertheless he still wears his military uniform trousers. According to his sect, "all organisation is the work of the devil"... "We live from God's hand", the sect teaches, "we earn our bread in the sweat of our brow we expect nothing from the State. We bake our bread from the wheat of the kolchose, and we receive everything else like clothes, etc. from Soviet economy" (not from the State). "There are dozens of people like Bobrovsky", ("Komsomolskaia Pravda" continues ...) These people "only sin when it serves their purpose". But when it is a matter of fulfilling their social duties, these people suddenly prefer not to sin.

"Should we not try to dissuade these religious idlers by other means than by lectures and discussions? The question is on what do these 'people of God' live? What is behind their 'holy words?' Some kind of mischief, surely, from which we must protect our youth."

USSR

A girl who ran away from religion
("Komsomolskaia Pravda", April 1959)

A girl called Galja Timchenko left her parents' house in order to try her wings as an art-student in Kursk. She took a room with a widow "who had lost all interest in life and turned religious."

One day Galja gave herself up to the police. She saw no alternative but to ask them to help her.

What had happened? How could the police help Galja in her nun's garb? Why did she not apply to her convent?

What had happened was this. Galja (or Galina, as she now called herself) had a lovely voice. "Why don't you sing in the church choir?" asked the widow. "God has given you a beautiful voice, and you ought to sing in the cathedral. When they hear you the people will be moved to tears and will thank God for your voice." At first Galina didn't want to. As a former Komsomol leader, she knew that religious influence has remained strong only in backward families. But the widow kept on. "You need only sing at Evensong. No one will blame you for that. Many great artists sing in Church." She added that "singing in the choir was the easiest way to earn some pocket-money, to supplement Galina's scholarship, and that it was a pleasant form of work and not tiring."

So Galina began to sing in the cathedral choir at Evensong. "She silenced her conscience by telling herself that she was thereby earning extra money, and that Chaliapin also sang in church choirs."

But at the art-school Galina's drawing was not at all good, and her marks were always poor. "I hear that you are singing in Church, Timchenko", said the headmaster, "a nice way of earning some pocket-money! ... but what about your drawing? You can't go on like this. You must give an explanation in writing."

So Galina wrote: "Nature has given me a good voice, and I have no difficulty in reading music, because I attended a music-school as a child. Singing in Church does not take up much of my time and has no influence on me as an art-student... About my drawing, my teacher has his own whims; he is never satisfied with what I do. He destroys one's interest in drawing altogether"...

"The position was clear. Professor Piskov was wrong." But a student who sings in the church-choir "may damage the reputation of the art-school". He therefore decided to expel her from it.

No one asked what was to become of her.

"Don't cry", said her landlady, "God will not leave you fatherless. The Church will not leave you in the lurch."

Galina was sent to Kiev where the Church found her free board and lodging. When they discovered that she could not only sing, but also draw, she was sent to an icon-painter to learn his art.

But a monk persuaded her, "Atone for your sins in the convent... there you will find the way to Paradise ... give your clothes to the poor and put on the nun's garb which is pleasing to God." And the Mother Superior of the Prilutsk Convent said, "we need more young nuns". Galina had already received the Church's blessing, but "she had to wait a little while." Then "the black nun's dress altered her appearance so much that she was unrecognisable. No one recognised the serious nun as the cheerful Galja."

She learned how to paint icons, But what use was her talent as an icon-painter? "Painting icons so that olderly people could say their prayers to them? And this at a time when people are seeking the sun, when man-made planets are circling the globe. Wasting her talents as an icon-painter meant depriving humanity of something."

"It is true, the great master of icon-painting, Rubliov, who lived in the 15th century, is still revered. But at that time Rubliov was a progressive thinker, who gave a new content to the religious form of his art, and tried to fill it with fresh meaning. He put life into his icons, and that is what makes his figures so human...."In those days (continues "Komsomolskaia Pravda") the Church was in a different position from today. "At that time every form of thought (philosophy, politics, art, etc.) was determined by theology."

"But wasting one's talents on the Church today, or turning to the Church at all, is like crossing oneself when one sees lightning... and renouncing happiness in this life on the pretext that one will enjoy it after death."

Galina began to realise that painting icons was not a lucrative business. "Some of the nuns do knitting to earn money, others paint icons. They paint pictures of the saints, in order to make money." Galina realised that things were quite different at the time of Rubliov. She could not go on painting stereotyped pictures of the saints, which were mere copies of an obsolete pattern. "She simply had to do something creative." Galina ran away from the convent and gave herself up to the police.

"They put her in touch with kind people who helped Galina to get some ordinary clothes, and talked with her about art, literature and the basic principles of true humanity."

But Galina remembered the monk who had promised her Paradise. What did he want her to do? "He wanted her to weep and pray for her salvation, instead of taking her fate in her own hands."

USSR "Pravda" attacks Jehovah's Witnesses

The Moscow journal "Pravda" condemns the "increasing activity" of Jehovah's Witnesses, a sect which is banned in the Soviet Union. According to "Pravda", this sect is becoming increasingly active in the districts of Irkutsk, Tomsk (Siberia) and in the Western Ukraine. The journal insists that it is impossible to remain in-

different in face of a renaissance of the power of obscurantism. "Pravda" further states that the influence of another sect "of American origin", the Seventh-Day Adventists, is spreading. The journal urges increased vigilance in view of "these apostles who are in the pay of foreign spy-services and war-mongers".

USSR Bishop Michael of Smolensk now Bishop of Orenburg

Bishop Michael of Smolensk and Dorogobushsk has been made Bishop of Orenburg and Buzuluk in the Urals.

Bishop Michael was a member of the first delegation sent by the Russian Orthodox Church (headed by Metropolitan Nikolai of Krutitsi and Kolomna) to Utrecht (Holland) in August 1958, to meet the leaders of the World Council of Churches.

His work in his new diocese is described as follows in the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate", Volume 5, May 1959:

"On Sunday, the 5th March, 1959, at Orenburg, the centre of the ikonostas in the Cathedral of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker was consecrated, after its restoration. The consecration service was conducted by Bishop Michael. The valuable carving, gilding and other beautiful artistic work had been carried out in accordance with a project of Bishop Michael, under the auspices of the administration of Orenburg.

"The ikonostas has been restored in the style of the late Empire (the 1840's).

"At the same time a wall-painting was unveiled representing "The Descent of the Holy Spirit" (a copy of a painting recently consecrated in the Piatnizki cemetery-church, Moscow).

"After the ceremony Bishop Michael delivered a short sermon about the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church in heaven, as represented by the ikonostas. Bishop Michael thanked the congregation for the generosity they had shown in raising the necessary funds for the restoration work."

USSR Christian Unity in the Struggle for Peace

After ten years' struggle for the maintenance of world peace, we are still faced by the task of coordinating the efforts of men of goodwill and concentrating them into a united force, in order to overcome all obstacles through peaceful co-existence between the nations.

As representative of the Russian Orthodox Church, it was my duty to draw the attention of the Officers of the World Peace Council to a characteristic aspect of our common work. When we look at

the results achieved we are bound to confess that after ten years' struggle for peace humanity is still exposed to the same dangers. This appraisal of the situation is not a lapse into pessimism, but an appeal to come to a fresh realisation of our duty and our task, which is certainly a fruitful one. We can say with satisfaction that the danger of a new war has been constantly averted during the last ten years, under the pressure of tremendous forces for peace ... In the struggle of the nations for peace, we notice that the idea of war and all that is connected with it has become discredited. Today no state or government would openly state that it desired a new war.

And yet armaments go on piling up, on the pretext of the need for defence. What is the explanation of this contradiction?

In searching for the answer to this question we must discover the underlying causes which make it difficult for East and West to meet on a basis of confidence. It is suspicion which prevents the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and the stopping of atomic tests, disarmament, the conclusion of peace treaties and the unification of Germany and Korea. Suspicion also explains why negotiations on these questions have so far proved unsuccessful, and why efforts to prepare the way for new negotiations have proved fruitless. Our first duty, therefore, is to turn our attention to mustering the forces which can create an atmosphere of confidence between the governments of the great powers.

In my opinion an atmosphere of mutual confidence can best be obtained through fostering mutual relationships. The results of such efforts in the past have proved satisfactory. We must therefore continue to mobilise the forces that will establish an atmosphere of mutual confidence between the governments of the great powers.

In many countries Christians have great opportunities for directly influencing the policy of their governments. Contacts between the Christian Churches and organisations in the different countries are thus of great importance. The radiation of life-giving forces by a Christian community may bear fruit in creating an atmosphere of mutual confidence. The idea of calling a Christian congress for the promotion of peace therefore merits wide support.

Through its numerous contacts with Western Christendom the Russian Orthodox Church has contributed much to mutual understanding between our peoples. It will continue to advocate fellowship between the Christian Churches in the West, in the interests of unity and world peace.

(Metropolitan Nikolai in the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate", No. 3, 1959, p.27)

USSR — Russian Baptist wants Christian peace congress

Alexander Karev, General Secretary of the Baptist Union in the USSR, advocates the holding of a world Christian peace congress.

In an article in "Novoe Vremia", a Moscow trade union monthly, he draws attention to efforts by churches in the West to promote peace. Resolutions passed by the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston in 1954 and by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at New Haven in 1957 are singled out for mention. Dr. Karev also refers to the peace questions placed on the agenda of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in the USA this summer.

"The success of a Christian peace congress of this kind depends mainly on the cooperation of the World Council of Churches", Dr. Karev writes. "If the World Council of Churches takes part, all the churches without exception will support it", he says.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA — Second meeting of the Christian Peace Conference at Prague

The second meeting of the Christian Peace Conference was held at Prague from April 16th to 19th, 1959, continuing the peace effort of the first meeting in June, 1958. There were 91 delegates present, representing the Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, United, Baptist, Methodist, Czechoslovak and Old Catholic Churches, the Unity of Brethren (Moravians) and other Christian groups (the Society of Friends, the Mennonites). They came from 16 different countries and three continents (Europe, North America and Africa). In a spirit of ecumenical cooperation they discussed the most urgent task of Christians today: how in the present plight of mankind the churches and Christians could and should cooperate to abolish hatred among mankind, to ban atomic weapons and tests, and achieve universal disarmament, cessation of the Cold War, understanding, reconciliation and the establishment of permanent peace for the good of all men who are children of God.

The Conference addressed a common message to all Christians and churches. It urged them to observe the day of repentance and intercession at the beginning of August, to contribute towards the cessation of the Cold War, to support the holding of a Universal Christian Peace Assembly, and to cooperate so that the Peace Conference could address a united message to the conscience of mankind demanding the banning of atomic weapons, and advocating disarmament, peace, and love of man for man, and for God.

The Conference issued the following Message to all Christians:

"Grace be unto you and peace. We greet you, brothers and sisters, with this apostolic salutation. As we did last year, we appeal to you amid the distress of the world.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for it. It is His will that all men should be helped and should come to knowledge of the truth. When the first atom-bomb fell on the unsuspecting city of Hiroshima, we entered a new era. Powers hitherto undreamed-of, capable either of good or of evil, have been given to man. He has taken control over death in a horrible fashion, he can store it in his arsenals, he can exterminate the whole human race like vermin with his weapons of mass-destruction. Life has been deprived of peace and love by the mere menace of these weapons, and has been perverted into fear and terror. When the first atom-bomb was dropped on Hiroshima it revealed in a flash the path which Christians must take. It is only through the Word of God that our eyes have been opened: we all share the guilt for the fear, the hatred and the warfare between man and man. Our selfishness has prevented us from loving those whom God loved so much. Our faith has been so weak that we imagined that weapons and human force would help us. We have gambled away the future given to us by God. The bomb that burst over that unsuspecting city has become a signal.

"We believe, however, that the Creative Word that once created the earth out of the formless void has power to awaken the conscience of men and to save life on earth from complete destruction. We believe that God allowed man to discover atomic energy so that he might use it responsibly for the welfare of mankind. Hiroshima must never occur again. We are profoundly disturbed by the fact that more and more countries aspire to acquiring nuclear weapons, instead of working for the general disarmament that is essential.

"When therefore we meet in our congregations and churches on the Day of Hiroshima this year in a service of repentance and prayer, we ask you all, both in the East and in the West, and all over the world, not to hold aloof from us. Let us stand together before God and let us, as His children, make a new beginning through His forgiveness.

"The gospel alone can liberate us from mutual terrorisation and deterrence and from becoming enmeshed in all kinds of propaganda. The gospel enables us to look at the condition of the world realistically. It gives us the strength to see and overcome the discord in our own ranks. It calls us to solve the burning problems of the world without violence. It gives us authority to deliver the message of peace in a convincing way, and to call the world to rise above its divisions and admit the guilt which we all share. For Christ is our peace; he has put an end to strife and has broken down the wall of partition between men.

"It is in his name that we can make peace, and we must start with ourselves. Let us put an end to the Cold War, through which evil acquires the appearance of good. Faced with all the factors which poison the atmosphere even between Christians we pray, that among ourselves, in our congregations and churches, mistrust may be replaced by confidence. Let us accept the other man's word. Let there be no arbitrary classification of friend and foe among us. Let us take heed lest we contribute to the preparation of hot war by ideological propaganda concerned only about our own security. If we fail in this task, our interest in peace is an empty phrase.

"We think the time has come for the churches to meet, in a way transcending the present form of their cooperation, for an All-Christian Assembly to promote World Peace. Its task will be to help establish a lasting peace and to conclude treaties to that end, to work for general disarmament, especially the abolition of nuclear armaments, and through all this to promote understanding and reconciliation between the nations. We know that this is no easy task. We are, however, convinced that such an assembly, if wisely planned, will further the ecumenical movement and will strengthen all the forces for peace in the world. Blessèd are the peacemakers!"

CZECHOSLOVAKIA — Preparatory Committee for a world Christian Peace Assembly

The Commission discussed the problem of convening a world Christian Peace Assembly. All agreed that Christians of all churches and countries were called to a common witness for peace, and that the extremely serious political situation forced us to realise that procrastination was impossible.

An universal Christian Peace Assembly, however, requires very careful preparation. The "Prague Conference" should seek contacts with churches, church committees and individual personalities in order to achieve as broad a participation in the Assembly as possible. The Committee accepted the opinion of the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and of the Russian Church of Evangelical Christians (Baptists) that some time early in 1961 would be a suitable time to hold the Assembly.

This means that the Preparatory Committee which is to be formed must immediately approach not only the World Council of Churches as such, but also those responsible for the study on "Christians and the Prevention of War in an Atomic Age", and also Christians in Japan, in other Asian countries and in Africa, the Committee of European Churches (the "Nyborg Committee"), the Church organisations in the USA (if possible also by a personal visit), churches which are outside the World Council of Churches, and a number of Christian personalities, and try to win their support and cooperation. Churches taking part in the present Prague Conference should invite other churches of the same denomination in other countries to co-operate. Theological and practical preparations for the Assembly, and the informing of congregations about its aims, should take place in individual churches and in regional inter-church conferences.

The Commission is convinced that by launching the world Christian Peace Assembly it is performing an important service in implementing the world-wide responsibility of the ecumenical Church.

A preparatory Committee must be formed. The following names have been suggested: Prof. J.L. Hromadka, Prof. A. Wantula, Prof. L.N. Parijskij, Prof. M. Sesan, Archbishop J. Krivit, Bishop T. Bartha, Prof. Mayer, Oberkirchenrat B. Lotz, Prof. H. Vogel, Prof. H.J. Iwand, Prof. H. Gollwitzer, Prof. E. Wolf, Prof. A.J. Rasker, Prof. W. Nieńczyk, Bishop M. Novak, General Inspector A. Ziak,

Oberkirchenrat H. Kloppenburg, Kirchenpräsident M. Niemoller, Prof. A. Schweitzer, Prof. W. Schmauch. This list is still incomplete. It is proposed that two sub-committees be formed. First of all a theological sub-committee is to sit in Prague with B. Pospisil as its Secretary. It is suggested that this sub-committee should consist of two representatives of Churches in Western Europe (Rasker and Kloppenburg), one representative of the Orthodox Churches, three representatives of Churches in Eastern Europe. For technical reasons it is advisable that this sub-committee should be small and that it should be confined to people who can meet without much difficulty.

In each country a liaison officer of this sub-committee is to be appointed to keep in touch with the churches and personalities there.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA — Telegram from the Christian Peace Conference at Prague to the Conference of Foreign Ministers at Geneva

The following telegram was sent by the Officers of the second Christian Peace Conference at Prague to the Conference of Foreign Ministers at Geneva:

"The delegates of the Orthodox, Old Catholic and Protestant Churches (over a hundred in number) who recently attended the second Christian Peace Conference at Prague, appeal to the representatives of the nations to leave no stone unturned in order to put an end to the period of destruction which began in 1933, and to open up a way of peaceful co-existence for the nations in Central Europe.

"We, on our part, want to do everything in our power to promote the spiritual and cultural bases for the peace efforts of the statesmen, to avert war and to eradicate the deep roots of antagonism between the nations. Respect for life and regard for man call today for energetic and sincere action in the interests of lasting peace."

The telegram was signed by the Officers of the second Christian Peace Conference: Prof. Dr. H. Vogel (German Federal Republic), Metropolitan Pitirim (Soviet Union), Dr. V. Hajek, Chairman of the Christian Peace Conference (Czechoslovakia), Prof. Dr. W. Nieńczyk (Poland), Bishop Dr. Tibor Bartha (Hungary) and B. Pospisil, General Secretary of the Christian Peace Conference (Czechoslovakia).

POLAND — An "Ecumenical Fellowship" formed in Poland

The press service of the "Christian Ecumenical Council in Poland" has published a statement made by representatives of the four confessions which are members of the "Ecumenical Council", namely: the Evangelical Church of the Augsburgian Confession in Poland, the Mariavite Church, the National Catholic Church of Poland and the Evangelical Reformed Church.

The statement says: "A group called the "Ecumenical Fellowship" has been formed among the members of the Polish Ecumenical Council. Its purpose is to encourage the Churches to learn from one another to the mutual enrichment of their religious life, and in order to deepen their ecumenical unity through joint worship-services and inter-communion. The "Ecumenical Fellowship" has drawn up the following tenets as its theological basis:

1) The Bible is the highest norm of faith. The truth contained in the Bible is historically revealed in the forms of the different confessions and their traditions, which are not contrary to biblical truth.

2) Episcopacy with the Apostolic Succession is a worthy historic symbol of spiritual unity with the Early Church, and a fraternal bond between the clergy who belong to the "Ecumenical Fellowship".

3) The Sacraments appointed by Christ are supernatural means of grace determined by the tradition of the particular Confession. the supreme Sacrament is the Eucharist or Sacrament of the Altar or Sacred Mass, the nature of which is to be understood from the words pronounced at its institution, the purport of which cannot be effaced by any confessional interpretation.

4) The members of the "Ecumenical Fellowship" testify to their spiritual unity by holding joint worship-services and services of communion, at which a clergyman belonging to the "Fellowship" officiates. These services are public. All ecumenical Christians may participate in the Holy Communion.

5) Any clergyman of any confession can be a member of the "Ecumenical Fellowship", provided that his confession is based on the ecumenical movement and on the principles of the "Ecumenical Fellowship". Members of the "Fellowship" are under an obligation to remain loyal to their own confessions, but at the same time to bear witness within their own churches of the blessing of the ecumenical movement.

6) The "Ecumenical Fellowship" has no organisational forms of its own. It regards itself as a spiritual centre and as a vanguard of the ecumenical movement within the Polish Ecumenical Council."

POLAND — Discussion on "Ways of achieving Ecumenism"

At the Warsaw centre of the Polish Ecumenical Council, which includes a bookshop and a lending-library of current publications, an ecumenical group meets every Tuesday for discussion and information. This group also includes people whose churches do not belong to the Polish Ecumenical Council. One of the guests recently gave a talk on the subject of "Ways of achieving Ecumenism", and described the attitude of the different churches toward the ecumenical movement. He explained that while the Roman Catholic Church is general accused of opposing the ecumenical movement by its exclusiveness, other churches are keeping somewhat aloof as well. The "ecumenical movement" did not want any syntheses; it was based in his opinion on a minimum of the doctrinal beliefs held by its member-churches. It was therefore a minimal ecumenical movement, not a maximal one which endeavoured to reconcile the differences between the confessions. The ecumenical movement today is trying to promote the common life of the Christian denominations. The speaker said that in his view the denominations should aim at mutual spiritual enrichment through knowing one another, by accepting the traditions and forms that have lived on in other confessions. The aim of ecumenism should therefore be to reconcile the churches not on a minimal but on a maximal basis.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA — The place and task of the Church today

In his introduction Dr. Pospisil* stressed his conviction that, for a theologian, it would be an act of irresponsibility to deal with a problem remote from the questions of everyday life.

What he, above all, has learned was that it is a great privilege to live in our age. The rapidly developing world changes almost day by day, and this change has a far-reaching effect also on the church and its theology. The church faces the task of rethinking the first article of faith and reviewing all those philosophical elements of heterogeneous nature which, over centuries past, have been domiciled in its theological thinking and become integral parts of its preaching. In this effort an abstract and self-seeking theologising would be of no avail.

Here he referred to Comenius who shortened his stay as student at Heidelberg and decided to walk home in order to save money for the purchase of a work of Copernicus, "De revolutionibus orbium caelestium." Beyond making this financial sacrifice, he also took the risk of an inner conflict for the sake of keeping abreast of scientific development, though this science of his age seemed to contradict the teaching of his church that he above all loved. So his act is an example of what the church today should do and what I called the privilege of the church today - said Dr. Pospisil.

It is the task of the Protestant churches to proclaim that only to the extent that a religious community is willing to regard as its primary task to "lay down its life for its friends", can it really partake of the nature of the true church. The church

*(one of the representatives of the Comenius Theological Faculty in Prague.)

must discharge its obligation in the perspective of the genus humanum. The logic of history demands that Christians in the peace movement walk together with the revolutionary elements of society - with Marxists, Communists - in an open-minded and honest spirit. The fact that atomic weapons exist is probably the last test to which God wishes to subject the church. Will the voice of the church be loud enough and its prayer humble enough? Will it be able to point to the ethical norms which indicate the limits of man who is ready to transgress his boundaries? We must perform our peace service as a service and not as an act of seeking security for ourselves, and atomic weapons should never become the means for Christianity to preserve the status quo or even to reconquer the status quo ante.

I think again of Comenius, (said Dr. Pospisil in the concluding part of his lecture) who, in a revolutionary age, availed himself with the boldness of faith of the latest accomplishments of science, knowing that the church, should recognize the fresh opportunities which open up before it for service.

USSR — The Christian Symbols of Faith and Councils

Protohierei V. Borovoi, lecturer at the Religious Academy of the Russian Orthodox Church in Leningrad, deals with this question in the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate", No 9, 1956. (Father Vitaly Borovoi was one of the two delegates from the Patriarchate of Moscow, who paid a four weeks visit to the General Secretariat of the World Council of Churches in Geneva in July 1959.) He begins by saying that the Orthodox Church has always taught that all the dogmas of the Christian Church are based on the divine revelation; that the Church is the guardian and exponent of these truths; and that dogma expresses the truth of the doctrine as derived from Holy Scripture and from sacred tradition, which has been handed down unaltered from one generation to the next by the One Holy Universal Christian Church.

These truths are laid down in the Symbols of the Church, which have binding force upon Christians.

The Symbols of the first seven Church Councils express the truth of the undivided Church. They correspond to the truth contained in the Catholic confession. After the schism between the Eastern and Western Churches, certain confessional statements were added, which were incorporated by some of the confessional groups in the West into their symbolic writings.

The Orthodox Church recognises only the confessional Symbols which existed at the time of the undivided Church. It does not recognise any of the later Symbols. It accepts the authority solely of the original teaching of the Apostles, as maintained in their tradition.

The fact that it has acted rightly is proved by the fact that the Nicene-Creed has been retained as a true ecumenical creed in all Churches, irrespective of other differences of belief (e.g. in the Anglican Church).

From the point of view of dogma, the Ecumenical Councils were the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit in the Church. From the point of view of the Canon, the Councils were the supreme organ of ecclesiastical authority (in matters of legislation, administration and belief). No other authority was recognised as superior to that of the Councils. All the members of the Church, both lay and clerical, were under their jurisdiction and subject to their decisions.

Later on, it is true, the Church accepted violations of these decisions, but only in the case of the Canon, not in the case of dogma.

The witness of the Church itself shows that the Church has the right:

a) to expound the confessional dogmas for the Church as a whole in the spirit of Holy Scripture,
b) to examine the traditions of the regional churches by the standard of pure tradition,
c) to take binding decisions concerning any new confessional teachings which arise,
d) to confirm or modify the decisions of the preceding Councils,
e) to extend or limit the right of the individual regional churches,
f) to exercise supreme legislative authority over the heads of the autocephalous Churches, and over the regional churches as a whole.

The decisions of the Ecumenical Councils were based on the common confessional witness of the regional churches through their episcopal representatives at the Council. "Sobornost" is the all-embracing confessional witness in harmony i.e. with a view to the sections of the Church which are bound together in love, and which thus represent "a bond of love in the unity of the faith".

According to the conception of the Ecumenical Councils, the characteristic of infallibility promised by Christ to His Church applies to them. The only genuine Ecumenical Councils have been those whose decisions can be taken as an expression of the voice and the perceptive capacity of the whole Church, and which have been recognised by it.

It is the Church as a whole, and no one else, which has the right to decide whether a Council is a genuine Council, i.e. whether it represents the supreme ecclesiastical authority...

This acceptance by the Church is not ultimately dependent upon the participation of papal legates and hence with the recognition of the Pope, as the Catholics believe, nor upon the recognition of governments (as the Protestant canonists believe), nor upon the participation of all the regional churches (the Ecumenical Councils were church-assemblies of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire), nor upon the direct recognition of an Ecumenical Council by the individual churches...

Only one thing is needed: that a Council should express the truth which is binding upon the Church as a whole. Whether it does so may not be clear until a long historical development has taken place. The life of the Church, and history itself, place their stamp upon the Council, more than enything external. This was true of the Council of Nicaea, the two Councils of Constantinople and the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon ...

Altogether seven Councils were approved by the ecumenical Church. The decisions taken by these seven Councils have since been maintained in the Orthodox Church. It is characteristic of all the regional Orthodox Churches that they recognise these seven Councils. According to Orthodoxy, the recognition of these Councils is essential by every church which is a member of the undivided Church.

The Nicene Creed and the pronouncements on dogma taken by the seven Ecumenical Councils are decisive. According to the deep conviction of the Orthodox Church, their recognition is the essential mark of every church which has its roots in the undivided Church.

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer, the prayer of Jesus, has always been a particular concern of the Orthodox Church.

The love of this prayer has led, through the centuries, to the development of a religious movement to promote its deeper understanding and diffusion.

This movement had two centres, one on Mount Athos in Greece, the other in Northern Russia, in the monastery of Valamo situated on Lake Ladoga, not far from the Finnish border. It was here that Nazari, an abbot of the monastery, introduced the Lord's Prayer for special meditation.

The interpretation of the Lord's Prayer occasionally gave rise to discussions. The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church itself took up the question and thus had occasion to intervene from time to time. A considerable role was also played by Nil Sorskij who was able to render great services to the Russian Orthodox Church.

The fact that the Lord's Prayer still receives the same traditional attention today is shown by the following summary of a lengthy article published in the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate" in its third issue for 1959.

* * * * *

The prayer Christ taught us is so short ... that it can be said in one minute. Every child knows and understands it. And yet this prayer has such depth, such a wealth of ideas that its contents cannot be fully grasped within a human lifetime. Had Christ left us no other instructions than this prayer, we could not be sufficiently grateful to Him for it. Such is the value of this prayer which answers all the questions life may put to human hearts.

It starts with the words "Our Father"... All Christians know these words and it seems natural to us to call God our Father. Yet pagan people and the righteous of the Old Testament found it difficult to turn to God in childlike trust. Jesus Christ was the first to teach us that God is Love. It is only through the love of God the Father revealed in Jesus Christ that we have understood that the Father of Jesus Christ is also our Father who has considered us worthy of being His children. (I John, 3:1) "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God". The Evangelist John goes on to say "But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12).

When we say "Our Father", we must needs believe that the one to whom we are addressing these words really is our Father, from whom we keep no secrets, to whom we can confess all things and to whom we may submit all our requests.

As often as we start the Lord's Prayer with the words "Our Father", we must therefore ask ourselves: Are we worthy to be called God's children? May we turn to the Almighty, Eternal, Holy God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, in childlike presumption and ask Him as a son asks his father?

Happy is the man whom God's spirit has shown that he is truly God's child and that he may pray to Him like a child.

He who has God for his Father need not ask whether he may pray to Him. Do we ask a flower why it blossoms and perfumes the air? It just has to do so because that is its nature. In the same way we do not ask why a star shines. It just has to shine because that is its nature. Why should a man therefore not pray if his nature urges him to pray?...

But you are not the only one in need of God's fatherly love. You are not the only one to have the right of calling God our Father. There is the great family of God's children, who together with you call their Father, who pray to Him together with you and are in daily need of His counsel and help. They are no strangers to you. They are near to you. They are your brothers. What right have you to omit them in your prayers? Not only in Church, but in your own little room and wherever you kneel before God, millions of people are praying with you who like you have been called to be God's children and who like you bend their knees before Jesus Christ and in His name call upon God their Father. This prayer rising on all sides, this praise from Christendom rises to the throne of the Almighty and becomes one with the praise of the heavenly hosts. The Christian prays with this "wide" heart, with all and for all.

That is the reason why the Lord taught us to add to the words "Our Father" the words "who art in Heaven". We know that God is All-Present, that there is place in His boundless universe where He is not present. David used these words in praying to Him: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? ... If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there ..." (Psalm 139:7-10).

Why does Jesus in His prayer tell us to look for God in Heaven? For the same reason that David, the Prophet, prayed: "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord" (Psalm 130:1), that is to say, out of the abyss of the fallen world. We live in the abyss of our daily needs. But God in His glory rises above all things... From Him comes salvation and every perfect gift. As high as the heaven is above the earth, so high are His thoughts above our thoughts and His ways above our ways. As high as His wisdom and almighty power surpass all earthly wisdom, so does His love surpass all human love ...

How many reasons are there to keep in mind the word "our" and ask God's forgiveness for our trespasses. For all responsibility for trespasses reverts to us, not only that of our own sins but also that of our brothers' sins. They add a new layer of sin to our own sins ... a fresh burden to our responsibility before the judgment seat.

Nobody lives for himself and nobody commits a sin for his own sake. Every sin I commit is a sin of the whole of mankind. It is the common responsibility of all.

Earthly judgment may condemn only those who have committed a crime but before the throne of God we are all more or less responsible for all the crimes committed on earth ...

How shall we feel at the Last Judgment when our contemporaries accuse us saying: "Through your sins I was brought before the Judge. Your carelessness, your inconsiderate words ... have sown the seed of temptation in my soul." What will our answer be? How shall we justify ourselves?

We ask God to forgive our sins through His infinite love for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord ... who has sacrificed Himself for us and became our Saviour. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19). We know therefore on what our hope is based and in whose name we may pray "forgive us our trespasses". But what do the words: "As we forgive those that have trespassed against us" mean? God wants us to forgive and be good to those who have wronged us. He knows how difficult it is for us ... to forgive others voluntarily and whole-heartedly up to 70 times a day - without pride, ambition or indignation - in order to prove the sincerity of our forgiveness. Our Lord therefore says: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matth. 6:14-15)...

The seventh request of the Lord's Prayer "but deliver us from evil" in the Greek version reads "deliver us from all that is wicked "that is to say, save and keep us from all that is harmful and bad. That is why the last invocation of the Lord's Prayer certainly appeals to people who usually object to any kind of prayer. But everybody wants to be saved from evil...

Our natural inclination would be to put the seventh request in the place of the first and to say "Deliver us, Father, from all evil" and to continue with the words "Hallowed be Thy name". Now our Lord certainly had his reasons for putting the seventh request at the end. It would lead to nothing if the things we ask for in the first three requests had not been heard first: that the name of God, our heavenly Father, be hallowed; that His kingdom come and that His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. What would it serve us to be freed of all that we call evil if the root of all evil, if sin were to remain within us and if we were to continue outside His kingdom without a real knowledge of God the Father and as enemies of His divine will?

In the seventh request, then, we ask to be saved not only from what we generally call "evil" and consider to be "evil", but we pray also for the salvation of all distress of mind and soul, salvation from sin and from the father of all sinners, the devil: salvation also from all that disturbs the peace of our souls, robs us of spiritual happiness and separates us from our heavenly Father and blissful fellowship with Him...

However long man may live, there comes for him the last hour when he is freed of all that is evil... When we therefore utter the seventh request out of the fulness of our hearts "and deliver us from evil", we pray to our heavenly Father primarily to ... take us from this vale of tears into His Kingdom of Heaven. God has promised to hear our prayers. We may turn to Him as we turn to our own fathers and confidently say with Jesus "Amen".

Regulations for admission to the Religious Seminaries of the Russian Orthodox Church, 1959/60

Seminars: Zagorsk, Leningrad, Kiev, Minsk, Odessa, Saratov, Stavropol, Volyn'.

First Semester: The Seminaries are open to all young men who have reached the age of eighteen and have had secondary school education. Candidates should be able to recite a certain number of prayers (here follows a long enumeration of prayers). They are further required to be able to read fluently Slavonic church texts and to have an adequate knowledge of Russian grammar.

2nd, 3rd and 4th Semester: Candidates should have completed their secondary school studies and have successfully passed examinations in all subjects taught in the first semester. Candidates for religious seminaries should submit the following documents:

1) an application for admission
2) a duly-completed questionnaire including two photographs
3) birth-certificate, or certificate of age
4) attestations of education received
5) attestations of marital status (whether single, married, first or second marriage, divorced, number of children and close relatives indicating exact relationship)
6) medical certificate
7) curriculum vitae
8) letter of recommendation from the local parish priest, confirmed by the Bishop-in-charge
9) military papers
10) certificate of baptism

Religious Academies: Zagorsk and Leningrad
Regulations for entry:

1) Minimum age 18 years
2) Four years of advanced studies
3) Entrance examinations in the following seminary subjects:
Old and New Testament, dogmatic theology, moral theology, general theology, comparative theology, canon law and liturgy, general ecclesiology, Russian church-history, homiletics, Russian schisms and sects, pastoral theology, Constitution of the USSR, Greek and Latin, one modern language, church Slavonic, church music.

Candidates who have passed the examinations of a religious seminary with honours are admitted without entrance examination.

USSR

Metropolitan Boris about religious life in the USA

("American Review of Eastern Orthodoxy", No. 3, 1959)

Metropolitan Boris of the Orthodox Russian Church of Odessa and Kherson, praised the "religious spirit" in the United States, and in particular the work of the religious press.

The Metropolitan was interviewed in Moscow by Religious News Service, after returning from a three-months' visit to the United States as Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate for North America and the Aleutians.

The 53-year old churchman said the only criticism he had to make of the religious life in the USA was that too little time seemed to be devoted to religious services and sermons, as compared with Russia. Concerning the religious press, however, he said he had no reservations whatsoever, and that he was impressed with their up-to-the-minute coverage of significant events. He contrasted the excellent press work of the various American religious bodies with the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, which "published November material in its January issue".

Metropolitan Boris expressed thanks, in particular, to the National Council of Churches in the United States for its "attitude of goodwill, which gave me an opportunity to become acquainted with its various religious activities". He said, he shared the Council's wish to maintain the contacts with the Russian Orthodox Church which were exstablished in 1956, when Metropolitan Nikolai of Krutitsi and Kolomna visited America.

Observing that the purpose of his visit to the USA was to visit parishes under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, he said he considered his mission "fruitful and necessary because there has been no permanent Exarch there for the past three years... I am glad to say, not only the group which recognises the Moscow Patriarchate considered me as its spiritual father, but there were also voices among the separated Russian Orthodox believers, including Metropolitan Leonty, who urged reconciliation with Moscow".

The Metropolitan has his permanent residence at Odessa, where he occupies a two-story mansion overlooking the Black Sea. A church with places for 700 people is attached to the mansion.

USSR — The Nyborg Conference

The participation of a representative of the Church of the Moscow Patriarchate at the Conference of European Churches held at Nyborg (Denmark) from January 6th to 9th, 1959, is reported on in the April issue of the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate."

"A Conference of European Churches was held at Nyborg from January 6th to 9th, its theme being "European Christianity in the secularised world of today." It was attended by 28 churches from different countries of Europe. The participants included Metropolitan James of Melita (Patriarchate of Constantinople), the Archbishop of Bialostock (Polish Orthodox Church), Jan Kiivit (Archbishop of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Esthonia), Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard (Primate of the Church of Denmark), Dr. Ernst Wilm (President of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia) and Dr. Martin Niemöller (President of the Evangelical Church of Hesse-Nassau). The meeting was also attended by Dr. Visser 't Hooft (General Secretary of the World Council of Churches) and by the representative of the Moscow Patriarchate, Professor L.N. Parijskij of the theological academy of Leningrad.

"After extensive consultation the Conference reached the conclusion that the task of the European Churches is to create contacts between churches, and especially to consolidate their efforts to free the peoples of Europe and of the whole world from the menace of atomic warfare."

YUGOSLAVIA — The position of the Church in Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia is a state composed of different nationalities. This is reflected not only in its national structure but also in the confessional composition of the people. Yugoslavia is the home of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins and several national minorities. The overwhelming majority of the population have some religious affiliation. The national census of March 31st, 1953, showed that of the total population with a religious affiliation, 48% belonged to the Serbian Orthodox Church, 36% to the Roman Catholic Church, 14% were Mohammedans, 1.01% Protestants, and the remainder belonged to other Christian, Jewish or non-Christian groups.

On the other hand, the census showed that about 2½ million of the total population of 19 million considered themselves as not belonging to any religious institution. Yugoslavia has introduced the separation of Church and State and has granted equal rights to all religions. The State grants freedom of conscience and religious liberty to all denominations, and ensures their equal rights and freedom of worship. It demands, however, that no religious community or its members should misuse religious liberty for political aims. The religious belief of individuals is considered as a private affair.

The Constitution of the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has laid down the following basic principles:

1) All citizens are granted freedom of conscience and religious liberty.

2) The Church is separated from the State; religion is separated from the schools.

3) Religious groups are granted independence in church affairs, and freedom of worship, provided that their doctrines are not in contradiction with the Constitution.

4) The misuse of the Church for political aims is prohibited.

5) Religious groups may maintain schools for the training of ministers and priests; these training-centres are, however, under the supervision of the State.

6) The State may give material support to religious groups.

The details of the relationship between Church and State were fixed by the law governing the legal position of religious groups, passed in 1953. According to this law, citizens have the right to found new religious groups, provided that their activity conforms to the law. Religious instruction in church buildings is unrestricted. Pupils of state schools cannot attend religious instruction during school hours. For attendance at religious instruction classes the permission of both parents or of the guardian, as well as the consent of the child, is needed. To protect religious liberty, article 313 of the penal code stipulates that anyone who violates or hampers freedom of worship is subject to a

fine or imprisonment up to a year. The maintenance of the civic register is a state affair. The same applies to marriages. Article 26 of the Constitution stipulates that a marriage is not legal unless it has been concluded before the appropriate state authorities. After the civic marriage has taken place, a marriage according to religious rites is permitted. Requests for divorce come within the competence of the ordinary lawcourts.

According to the law on land reform and colonisation passed in 1945, each of the religious groups was allotted 10 hectares (25 acres) of arable land and 10 hectares of barren land. Church foundations of cultural and historical importance were granted 30 hectares (75 acres) of arable land and 30 hectares of forest land each. According to a law passed in 1951, the pastors of the different religious groups are eligible for social insurance, if the highest administrative authority or pastors' association concludes a contract with the State Insurance Bureau to that effect. Ministers have the right to establish their own associations for the protection of their professional interests. An application bearing the signatures of at least 10 enfranchised citizens is required for the establishment of such associations.

The institution which deals with matters concerning the relationship between the State and religious groups is the State Commission for Religious Affairs. Its functions are to examine matters concerning the relationship between the State and the religious groups; to give expert opinions on concrete problems; to supervise the carrying out of laws governing the relations between the State and the religious groups; to consider proposals for granting support to religious groups, etc.

Swiss Evangelical Press Service
Zurich, June 1959

CZECHOSLOVAKIA — Sponsoring materialist philosophy

The Deputy Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Kopecky, addressing the Central Committee of the Czech Communist Party, insisted that teachers should be required "not only to conform to Marxist philosophy but to teach in accordance with its spirit and with deep inner conviction".

He regretted that many teachers still led a religious life, and recommended the introduction of an illustrated book describing the formation of the world and the origins of mankind according to materialist philosophy. He also advocated including a course on "the Ethics of Communism" in the curriculum.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA — Slovak Lutheran Church celebrates the fortieth anniversary of its independence

This year the Slovak Lutheran Church commemorates the fortieth anniversary of its independence. Until the end of the first world war the Slovak Lutherans formed part of a single church body, together with all the other Lutherans living in Hungary. At the beginning of 1919 the process of forming an independent church started. It met with considerable difficulties, even at a time when conditions had already been settled for the peaceful development of the Protestant Churches in Bohemia and Moravia. In Slovakia the organisation of the Lutheran Church after the first world war was complicated and retarded particularly by national differences within the church. There was an important minority of Hungarians and Germans among the church-members. Today the Slovak Lutherans gratefully commemorate the dawn of their Church's independence, "realising the obligations which their hard-won independence places upon them."

In Bfief.

Eighty per cent of all babies in Russia are being baptised in the Orthodox Church, the Rev. Dr. Oscar B. Rundblom (Dean of the Cathedral at Västerås, Sweden) reported recently on his return from a visit to Moscow. On the other hand, he said, the number of marriages celebrated in the Russian Orthodox Church "has fallen considerably". He added that there is "no difficulty" in obtaining candidates for the priesthood, and that at present there are eight theological training-colleges with a combined total of at least 1.500 students.

* * *

The Religious Academy in Leningrad, the traditional centre of theological teaching and research in Orthodox Russia, recently celebrated its 150th anniversary.

* * *

In Hungary, the first Communist "name-giving" ceremony was held recently at a factory in Raab, according to a story in the newspaper "Nepszava" published in Budapest. The story said that speakers emphasised that "enlightened people must seek liberation from the Church's monopoly over mind and soul" and urged that family events, such as baptisms, marriages and deaths, be marked in a "progressive manner" and not commemorated by church ceremonies.

* * *

According to the report received from Peking the Hungarian delegation - Bishops Bartha and Kaldy, Editor Finta and Pastor Dobos - invited by the Three-Self Movement of the Chinese Protestant Churches arrived at Peking June 20th, 1959. They flew from Budapest, via Moscow, in a TU 104 jet plane. Accompanied by the leaders of the inviting sister churches, the delegation has begun a tour in the Chinese People's Republic, where they will meet the leaders of the congregations, church districts and institutions.

* * *

A new anti-religious magazine "Nauka i Religiya" (Science and Religion) will appear monthly, and the first issue will be on sale in September 1959.

I N D E X

1) CHURCH LIFE IN THE USSR:

A) Orthodox

i) General:

Bishop Michael of Smolensk new Bishop of Orenburg 3, 21
The Christian Symbols of Faith and Councils ... 3, 29
Regulations for admission to the Religious Seminaries of the Russian Orthodox Church 3, 34
Metropolitan Boris about religious life in the USA 3, 35
150 anniversary of Religious Academy in Leningrad 3, 39
80% of all babies in Russia are being baptised 3, 39

ii) Sermons:

The Lord's Prayer 3, 31

B) Other churches

Religion and Church in the USSR 3, 2
Missionary Effort 3, 6
A short guide to Moscow 3, 10

2) ANTI-RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA:

A) Inside the USSR

Insistence on a stronger scientific basis for atheist propaganda 3, 11
Improved atheist propaganda in Kaliningrad 3, 12
Soviet periodical pays Baptists a back-handed compliment 3, 12
A stirring drama - "The Torch" 3, 13
Of young believers and religious indifference among teachers 3, 15
Let him go 3, 16
A queer kind of soldier 3, 17
A girl who ran away from religion 3, 19
"Pravda" attacks Jehovah's Witnesses 3, 20

B) Outside the USSR

Czechoslovakia:

Sponsoring materialist philosophy 3, 38

Hungary:

First Communist "name-giving" ceremony 3, 39

3) RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES OUTSIDE THE USSR:

The Nyborg Conference 3, 36
Hungarian Church delegation arrived in Peking 3, 39

4) CHURCH-LIFE IN EASTERN EUROPE OUTSIDE THE USSR:

Czechoslovakia:

Slovak Lutheran Church celebrates the fortieth anniversary of its independence 3, 39

Hungary:

The place and task of the Church today 3, 28

Poland:

An "Ecumenical Fellowship" formed in Poland 3, 27
Discussion on "Ways of achieving Ecumenism" 3, 28

Yugoslavia:

The position of the Church in Yugoslavia 3, 37

5) PEACE MOVEMENTS:

Czechoslovakia, Second meeting of the Christian Peace Conference at Prague 3, 23
Czechoslovakia, Preparatory Committee for a world Christian Peace Assembly 3, 25
Czechoslovakia, Telegram from the Christian Peace Conference at Prague to the Conference of Foreign Ministers at Geneva 3, 26
USSR, Krushchev and Religion 3, 8
USSR, Christian Unity in the struggle for peace ... 3, 21
USSR, Russian Baptist wants Christian peace congress 3, 23